

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 249667

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TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

UNCLAS STATE 249667

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PAGE 02 STATE 249667

TAGS: EC, PFOR

SUBJECT: NOON PRESS BRIEFING -- OAS MEETING

PLEASE PASS BRIAN BELL

FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT DEPARTMENT NOON PRESS
BRIEFING TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12:

Q: WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THE VOTE IN QUITO?

A: I HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY REPORTS ON ANY VOTING.

AS FAR AS THE U.S. POSITION IS CONCERNED, BECAUSE THERE
WERE SOME COMMENTS IN THE PRESS ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD
THIS MEETING, THE QUITO MEETING WAS CALLED AT THE
INITIATIVE OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, SPECIFICALLY COSTA
RICA, COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA. AT THE TIME THIS INITIATIVE
WAS TAKEN WE WERE ASKED NOT TO BE OPPOSED AND WE READILY
WENT ALONG WITH THIS REQUEST, AS YOU ALL KNOW. THE RESOLU-
TION OF THE SPONSORING COUNTRIES WAS ONE IN WHICH THE U.S.

WAS NOT AN INITIATOR, AND WE CONSIDER THAT OUR ATTITUDE
HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE HERE ALL ALONG BY NOT STANDING IN
THE WAY OF THOSE WISHING TO DEVELOP A CONSENSUS. WE TOLD
OUR LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS THAT THEY SHOULD PROCEED AND TRY
TO DEVELOP A CONSENSUS, AND WE DID NOT FEEL THAT WE WANTED
TO FORCE A CONSENSUS ON THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

Q: WHY DO YOU REGARD YOUR ATTITUDE AS CONSTRUCTIVE ALL
ALONG? CONSTRUCTING WHAT?

A: WE AT NO TIME OPPOSED THE HOLDING OF THE QUITO MEET-
ING, AS YOU KNOW. YOU HAVE AMBASSADOR MAILLIARD'S STATE-
MENT, THAT HE MADE HERE AT THE TIME OF THE DECISION TO
HOLD THE QUITO MEETING. WE WERE NOT OPPOSED TO THAT
MEETING. WE HAVE ADOPTED A STRICTLY NEUTRAL ATTITUDE
HERE.

Q: WASN'T IT MORE NEUTRAL THAN CONSTRUCTIVE?

A: WELL I THINK IT IS CONSTRUCTIVE IF YOU LOOK AT THE
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PAGE 03 STATE 249667

PAST, THAT THIS IS A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION WE HAVE
TAKEN FOR THE REASONS I HAVE GIVEN.

Q: THE U.S. IN NO WAY LOBBIED AGAINST THE RESOLUTION?

A: WE DID NOT LOBBY AT ALL, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER DOWN IN
QUITO FROM ALL THE REPORTS I HAVE RECEIVED HERE.

Q: YOU PUT "CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE" IN THE PASSIVE SENSE
RATHER THAN AN ACTIVE SENSE, ISN'T THAT ITJB

A: AS I SAID EARLIER WE WERE NOT ONE OF THE INITIATORS OF
EITHER THE CONFERENCE OR THE RESOLUTION, BUT WE DID NOT
OPPOSE IT AND WE SO TOLD OUR LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS RIGHT
FROM THE BEGINNING.

Q: ISN'T ABSTENTION, WHEN YOU NEED A TWO-THIRDS VOTE, THE
SAME AS A NEGATIVE VOTE? HOW CAN THAT BE CONSTRUCTIVE?

A: I THINK THAT A NEGATIVE VOTE OR A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE
WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR DIFFERENT THAN A VOTE OF ABSTENTION.
IT CERTAINLY IS A VERY DIFFERENT POSITION AS FAR AS THE
UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED. I REPEAT WHAT I SAID EARLIER:
AT NO TIME WERE WE LOBBYING FOR OR AGAINST.

Q: SINCE THE 14 VOTES WERE REQUIRED, ABSTENTION IS TANTA-
MOUNT TO A NO VOTE, RIGHT?

A: I SUPPOSE YOU CAN SAY THAT IF YOU NEED TWO-THIRDS OF
THE VOTES TO PASS IT, THEN ARITHMATICALLY SPEAKING YOU CAN
SAY THAT IT IS EQUAL TO A NEGATIVE VOTE, BUT OUR ATTITUDE
WAS NOT NEGATIVE HERE FOR THE REASONS I HAVE STATED.

Q: DID WE LOBBY FOR ANYBODY ELSE TO ABSTAIN?

A: NO, WE DIDN'T DO ANY LOBBYING DOWN THERE ONE WAY OR
THE OTHER.

Q: COULD YOU SAY THAT THE U.S. ATTITUDE WAS SUCH THAT
WHILE NOT VOTING FOR THIS RESOLUTION, THE U.S. WOULD HAVE
LIKED TO HAVE SEEN IT PASSED?

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PAGE 04 STATE 249667

A: I WOULD RATHER STICK WITH WHAT I HAVE SAID. I DON'T
WANT TO CHARACTERIZE IT. KISSINGER

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